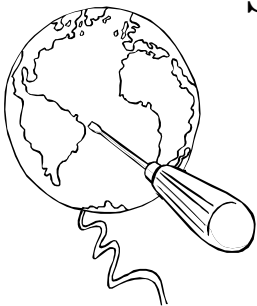


# "ONE PERSON'S TRASH"

Classroom Guide

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## Spring 2006



Happy Earth Day! With this issue, we celebrate the 36th anniversary of Earth Day. The first Earth Day in 1970 was planned as a nationwide teach-in about the environment.

Since Earth Day is an annual reminder that we need to take better care of the Earth every day, this would also be a great time for your class to undertake a special project.

If you have suggestions or comments for improving the newsletter or this Classroom Guide, please call or write us.

## *Living in a Material World*

Visit your school or public library to pick up copies of these three books by Peter Menzel:

*Material World: A Global Family Portrait* (with Charles C. Mann), *Women in the Material World* (with

Faith D'Aluisio), and *Hungry Planet: What the World Eats* (with Faith D'Aluisio). Ask your students to reread "We're Living in a Material World" (on Page 3 of the newsletter). Then give them time as a class to look at Menzel's three books.



### Discussion Starters

- Peter Menzel is a "photojournalist." What is the role of a photojournalist? How does the work of a photojournalist differ from that of a photographer or a journalist? How is it similar?
- For many families around the world (and in the United States), the animals that belong to the family are

sources of food, rather than being pets. What is the difference between an agricultural animal and a pet? Does your family have animals as pets? Does your family raise animals that produce food (chickens that lay eggs, cows that give milk, etc.) or become food (as sources of meat)? If not, do you know anyone who owns and raises animals for agricultural purposes? Have you ever seen these animals (at farms, local fairs, etc.)?



- In *Material World*, each family is asked to record its "Wishes for Future." What families wish for varies widely—from a second set of clothes to income-producing property to peace. Discuss these "Wishes for Future." What do the wishes tell you about the countries in which the families live? What do the wishes tell you about the socio-economic circumstances of an average family in each country? What do the wishes tell you about people in the families? As a class, list some "Wishes for Future."
- In each book, look at the role that children play in families. Do children and teens attend school? What kind of work do they do at home to help the family? Do they perform paid work to help support the family? Do children and teens have leisure time? Do they have discretionary income? In what countries do children and teens have lives most like American youth?
- In places without supermarkets, where and how do people get food? Do they grow and raise food? Do they visit marketplaces? How are the marketplaces organized? How far are the



marketplaces from people's homes? In what parts of the world do people seem to lack clean, running water in their homes? How and where do they get water?

How long does it take each day to get the water?

### Extension Activity

Place your students into three groups. Assign each group one of Menzel's books. Then, ask each group to create

an advertising campaign for the book. Each group will create the following: a promotional poster, a radio commercial, and a bumper sticker. Remind the students to include the title of the book and the authors' names in each medium. In addition, the students can create slogans; use graphics, art, and maps; make up endorsement quotations; etc. Encourage your students to be creative! When the projects are done, each group should "advertise" its book to the class by presenting its campaign materials.



# Reader Redux

Incorporate this newsletter into your classroom as you might use a newspaper. Whether you're teaching art or language arts or sociology, you can use articles in our newsletter to teach the skills and proficiencies that you're focusing on each day. Here are some "reuse" activities to help you get started:

- Ask your students if they watch reality TV. If some of them do, ask what some of their favorite programs are.

As a class, discuss what different shows "say" about our world. For instance, does the show value ingenuity? Does the show value risk? How about creativity? Does it encourage wastefulness or frugality? What kind of interpersonal relationships does each show encourage—competitive or cooperative, compassionate or cut-throat? What do all of the shows have in common (other than that they are on TV!)?



- The title of the British reality TV show "No Waste Like Home" is an allusion to a line from a movie. What is the title of the movie? What is the line? Which character says the line? This movie was based on a book. What is the title of that book? Who wrote the book? When was it originally published? (Here's a bonus question for you: Was the same line in the book?)



- Bitters Company takes flip-flop sandal scrap and turns it into clever and useful products. The book *Great Garden Gadgets* shows how to make clever garden items from trash. Ask your class to brainstorm a list of creative *and functional* products that might be made from scrap created at home or school.

- Some students may be mocha or latte drinkers, but others may stick with soft drinks. Like coffee cups, fountain drinks are usually sold in disposable paper or plastic cups. Ask students to bring in sample carry-out cups (used and rinsed out, of course).

Weigh each cup and calculate an average weight for all the cups. Now, ask students to tally how many disposable drink cups they use and toss each week. How much weight in cups does each student dispose each year? How much weight in cups does the class dispose each year? What are some ways to reduce this waste?



- Prom and other parties like it can be expensive for students and their families. On the left hand side of a sheet of paper, have students list what items they would "need" for these events (clothing, accessories, food, etc.). On the right, next to each item, have students note which items might be available "used," "rented," or "borrowed" instead of brand-new. Also, have them note if some items are not really needed. (As an extension of this activity, you could ask students to research and compare costs. How much could be saved by selecting as many used/rented/borrowed items as possible?)



# Scavenge the Internet

Ask students to visit these paperback book swapping websites:

- ♦ [www.paperbackswap.com](http://www.paperbackswap.com)
- ♦ [www.frugalreader.com](http://www.frugalreader.com)
- ♦ [www.titletrader.com](http://www.titletrader.com)

Then, ask them to answer these questions. In answering, students should provide the answer as well as the complete URL for the page where they found the answer.

- What can you trade at FrugalReader.com?
- How many books do you have to list (your books available for trade) in order to become a member at PaperBackSwap.com?
- Which of the three sites has the most members?
- Which of the three sites has the most available titles?
- Which of the three sites has the most types of material available for trade?
- If you wanted to trade a video game, which site would you use?
- Do any of the sites have membership fees? If so, which one(s)? What do the fees pay for?
- According to PaperBackSwap.com, what is the approximate cost to mail a book?
- Do any of the sites have the book *The Giver* by Lois Lowry available? If so, which site(s)?
- If you were looking for the March 2005 issue of *National Geographic Magazine*, could you find it through one of these sites? If so, which site(s)? Where else might you look (list three options)?